

Gospel

Dear You:

I haven't said good night
to anyone in too long a while—

Three syllables comprise your name—
light of my life, fire of my loins.

I had a grocery bag full of stuff to bring over—
a used CD with a song on it called "Don't Worry Baby,"
the weeks' alternative weekly,
some thumbbed-through magazines.

Soon after I remember walks at sunset and banh mi in the middle of the day—
too much Vietnamese iced coffee was like getting drunk,
our conversational reservoirs removed and we could tell each other,
only then, our true feelings.

My memories of you appear to me in a Polaroid,
in a cassette, or via stationery—
these archaic ways of communication that you and I mastered so well.

The first time we met is an over-exposed, washed out photograph.
The black tape snapped inside the plastic that contained the night
we first gave ourselves to each other.
I've smudged the ink on the letter written to tell you,
"I'm sorry for everything,"—
the words run together, imitating
the number of times I've had to reprise that sentiment.

You said to me recently,
"It feels like when we first met,"
only now I know the debt I'd owe you.

This explains why you saw me recently
naked on the floor kissing your feet—
I wanted to drink your spit and clean my face with your sweat,
kiss your pretty mouth, swirl my tongue with yours—
complete vulnerability and submission.

But:

We were lucky enough not to be harassed that day,
keeping our eyes down to the pavement.
I knew then, in our most perfect moment together,
you'd be gone and I'd be alone in the waiting room.
Now driving back down that city street,
I used to like it there, it just stings to remember.

I remembered the smell of your cat when it stretched out
on the coffee table, vapors emanating from its body,
and the moment when your brother was first to come home that day
spitting greetings into the thick air—
we didn't say anything.

I also remember the way she'd crook her neck
so her bangs wouldn't brush against my head;
it was courteous of her.
And when you found out—

I forgot that you whistle as you sleep—
and though we make a last-ditch effort
to dig holes next to each other,
work away sleep and stave off loneliness,
the futility of literature and songs
has never been more apparent
than in the perfunctory gaze
you bestow on me.

theredbackpack.tumblr.com